

The twain meets in music for the silver screen

Composers of Chinese orchestral music are better known today than they were even a few years ago, and names like that of Tan Dun (譚盾) are now familiar to the huge cinemagoing public following his success with the score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (臥虎藏龍). Less widely known in the West, but if anything even more prolific and certainly as influential, is the composer Zhao Jiping (趙季平, also Chi-ping Chao), who composed the scores for many of Zhang Yimou's (張藝謀) and Chen Kaige's (陳凱歌) most successful films.

The quiet-spoken Zhao is in Taipei for a concert, in collaboration with the National Chinese Orchestra (台灣國家國樂團), of his work that includes both well-known pieces such as the hugely successful *Suite From Raise the Red Lantern* (大紅燈籠高高掛組曲), which blends Beijing opera elements with the requirements of an orchestral score, as well as the Taiwan premiere of a

new work, *Xinxiang, Concerto for Erhu and Orchestra* (心香—胡琴協奏曲), featuring Taiwan-born Hong Kong-based *huqin* (胡琴) specialist Huo Shijie (霍世潔).

Apart from his music for the screen, Chao has been an active participant in another effort in East-West musical collaboration: Yo-yo Ma's Silk Road Project, for which he

has written a number of works. Tomorrow's program includes *Silk Road Fantasia* (絲綢之路幻想曲), with the Singaporean *guan* (管子, a double reed wind instrument) specialist Han Lei (韓雷) on the bill.

Zhao has been widely acclaimed, to quote the Silk Road Project's official Web site, "for his ability to combine traditional Chinese forms of expression and conventional Western orchestral forces." Speaking to the press at a rehearsal on Tuesday, he told of his experience as a music student during China's Cultural Revolution, when, unable to perform Western music, he taught himself orchestral composition by copying out and analyzing the scores of composers such as Beethoven. With the end of the Cultural Revolution and the slow revival of traditional arts, Zhao found himself posted to a regional opera school in Shaanxi, where he rose from graduate student to deputy director over a period of 20 years.

"As a student of Western music, I was a little reluctant to be posted to such a school," Zhao said. His father, a

successful traditional musician, helped change his mind, and Zhao threw himself into the study of Chinese regional folk music. It was with the production of Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (黃土地, 1984), a film about a Communist soldier sent into the badlands of Shaanxi to collect peasant folk songs, that Zhao broke into the movie industry. The film was a minor success, and was followed up with Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* (紅高粱, 1987). After that, there followed commissions for a whole string of movies, many of which continue to rank as some of the most internationally successful films, both critically and commercially, produced in China.

Zhao rose to prominence along with Zhang, Chen, and Chinese cinema diva Gong Li (鞏俐), who according to Zhao, was the first to recognize the potential of including Beijing opera elements throughout the score of *Raise the Red Lantern*.

Tomorrow's concert is a rare opportunity to review the work of one of China's foremost composers, and perhaps gain some insight into the delicate alchemical process of making gold out of a fusion of East and West.

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW



Zhao Jiping conducts the NCO at a rehearsal at the National Theater earlier this week.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NCO



"Deejaying will never die, there will always be the need for a live DJ ... until Japan invents deejaying robots," says Dominick Fresina, aka DJ **Fratzki** in the house scene, and now just plain Dom in the Taiwanese hip-hop scene.

Originally from Houston, Texas, the DJ, promoter and ex-restaurateur has lived in Taipei for four and a half years and now aims to become the only famous white rapper residing in Taiwan and rhyming in Mandarin.

"Being a DJ allows one person to be musically involved," said Dom, 29, "so that for me was a way to do something. Some of the best parties I played were Re:Action in Taichung at Wen In Hall with Tim Healy, Halloween at Luxy, and Love Fest back in Texas, a beach festival with over 10,000 people and lots of stages of random music all up and down the beach."

So why switch track?
"The house music scene in Taipei is dying off," said Dom. "People are not coming out to support the events regularly so there is a lack of the feeling of a good scene. Some of the promoters from a year ago are gone and events since then have kind of died off. A lot of the people that you could count on watching the sunrise with have moved, and the new people to Taiwan aren't coming out in the masses."

With an ambition for success, this perceived decline may have encouraged Dom towards his latest goal of becoming "the greatest thing to hit Asia since chopsticks."

When Dom's restaurant Ocean Blue went out of business in 2007, he found out one of his partners was a record executive at Machi Entertainment, a hip-hop label cofounded by **Jeff Huang** (黃立成) of Machi (麻吉) fame.

"I had always liked rap music and am pretty good at freestyling and MCing," said Dom. "I told my partner since we were going out of business I needed to find a way to make some dollar and he needed to give me a record deal. He said he would be open to my idea after I explained it, and so he gave me the confidence that it could be done."

Dom's latest tracks are certainly brimming with ideas.

"Most rappers try to be the hardest, and most gangster," said Dom. "My songs are about ridiculous topics like aliens and betel nuts. For me, it's a whole entertainment package as the music is a foundation around which I can express the full idea of videos, photos and one-of-a-kind shows to really make something special."

Having studied Chinese since he arrived here, he writes all his own songs and then works "with Taiwanese people on translation and making the wording a bit better," said Dom. "Pretty soon, at the end of the month, we are going to put out a three-song demo CD with my songs and an hour-long mixtape with my songs mixed in with other local Taiwanese rappers' music." Ten thousand will be pressed and handed out for free.

Beginning next month, Dom will be hosting a regular mixtape on the Web, "freestyling in English and Chinese, and having guest MCs come in and freestyle in both languages," he said. "Every month will highlight a new local DJ and new MCs to keep it fresh. I don't

care about people getting the music free as I want as many people out there to hear what we're doing, so they love it and come out and support the live shows."

The aspiring rapper is set to shoot a music video, his first, for the track *Something New*, a song about aliens that come to Earth and kidnap him in order to learn how to be cool.

Something New's production is pretty slick, the flow is pretty sweet and in the video Dom is sure to be ... pretty.

"The video will be out in August," said Dom, adding a hugely audacious claim that you can't help but respect.

"This is going to be the most bad-ass video you have ever seen, guaranteed!" Ever? Awesome!

Check out Dom at www.wretch.cc/album/ILOVEDOM for future dates, and catch him deejaying at Deep Passion on May 23.

If you agree with Dom that the house scene needs more support then get yourself down to China White tomorrow to see a couple of legends throwing down electro, house and breaks as **Paul Energy** and **vDub** will be on the ones and twos. NT\$300 gets you access to their years of collective house knowledge and a drink.

Tasty Beats is tomorrow from 10pm to 4am at China White, 2F, 97-101, Dunhua S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City, (台北市敦化南路二段97-101號2樓).

— TOM LEEMING

Dom could be the best thing since sliced bread and chopsticks.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ABSITZER



[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

EZ5 Live House hosts Mando-pop singers backed by a live band every night. Every Tuesday **Julia Peng** (彭佳慧) appears on stage and attracts a crowd. Other performers this week include **Tsou Nu** (鄧女) who performs today, **Yu Li-cheng** (于立成) playing tomorrow, and **Lang Tsu-yun** (郎祖筠) and **Lin Chun-yi** (林俊逸) on Wednesday.

► 211, Anhe Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市安和路二段211號). Call (02) 2738-3995 for more information or go to www.ez-5.com to check out the latest monthly lineup
► Music shows run from 9:45pm to 12:30am
► Entrance fee ranges from NT\$600 to NT\$800, depending on the performer

Every Wednesday night at the **Cosmopolitan Grill** there's a blues open mic, held by the Blues Society in Taiwan. Performers from all walks of life are welcome.
► 1F, 218 Changchun Rd, Taipei City (台北市長春路218號1樓). Call (02) 2508-0304 or visit www.cosmo.com.tw for more information
► 8pm to 11pm every Wednesday
► No admission fee

Rock bands **Monkey Pilot** (猴子飛行員) [see story on Page 14] and **La Petite Nurse** (小護士樂團) share the bill tonight at **Underworld** (地下社會). Tomorrow music fans can enjoy acts Brit-pop-style bands **1976** and **Bitter**, and indie rocker **Ban Ban** (班班). Appearing on Wednesday are **Happy Circle** and **Emotion Gate** (情緒出口).
► B1, 45 Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路45號B1). Call (02) 2369-0103 or

visit www.upsaid.com/underworld for more information
► Shows are from 9:30pm to 11:30pm on Fridays and Saturdays and 9pm to 11pm on Wednesdays
► Entrance is NT\$300 tonight and tomorrow and includes one drink, Wednesday's show is NT\$100

Exhibitions

Legend of Future (未來的傳說) is a group exhibition featuring 11 of Asia's top artists working in the mediums of sculpture and painting. The show includes South Korea's Kwon Ki Soo, Japan's Yoshitomo Nara and Yoshitaka Amano, and Taiwan's Yang Mao-lin (楊茂林) and Hung Yi (洪易). The works on display are inspired by the aesthetics of anime and manga.
► Metaphysical Art Gallery (形而上畫廊), 7F, 219, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段219號7樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 6:30pm. Tel: (02) 2771-3236
► Until May 31

Wood and stone carvings and ceramic Buddhist figurines are often decorated with a finishing coat of gold because it symbolizes one of the 32 *lakshanas* (bodily signs) of a Buddha. **Buddhist Statuary in Transition: An Exhibition of Gold and Bronze Statuettes** (藏佛觀雲—金銅佛像展) examines the various artistic styles of the different periods in which the religious art was produced.
► National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館), 49 Nanhai Rd, Taipei City (台北市南海路49號). Open Tuesdays

to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2361-0270. On the Net: www.nmh.gov.tw
► Until June 21

Headline (頭條新聞) is a joint exhibit by Taiwanese artist Kuo I-cheng (郭奕臣) and South Korean artist Kijong Zin. Taking the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks as their starting point, the two artists employ video, digital images and sculpture to explore how the mass media create the idea of the hero in contemporary society.
► Galerie Grand Siecle (新苑藝術), 17, Alley 51, Ln 12, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段12巷51弄17號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 1pm to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2578-5630
► Until May 17

Cloud Gate — Confronting the Ocean Exhibition (雲門特展—面對大海的進行式) is an exhibit that looks at the dance troupe's history. The display reveals how Cloud Gate has grown and evolved from a small dance company in 1973 to the world-class dance group that it is today, and how it is recovering from last year's fire that devastated its rehearsal studio.
► Taipei Story House (台北故事館), 181-1, Zhongshan N Rd, Sec 3 Taipei City (台北市中山北路三段181-1號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2587-5565
► Until June 28

MOCA, Taipei is currently running an installation for the 14 performance art companies and visual artists who were nominated for the Seventh Taishin Art Awards (台新藝術獎).
► Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei

(MOCA, Taipei), 39 Changan W Rd, Taipei City (台北市長安西路39號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2552-3721. On the Net: www.mocataipei.org.tw
► Until May 24

The Deep seeks to reveal the mysteries found in the deepest parts of the world's oceans, including some of the bizarre creatures that live there.
► National Taiwan Museum (台灣博物館), 2 Xiangyang Rd, Taipei City (台北市襄陽路2號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 5pm. Tel: (02) 2382-2566. On the Net: www.ntm.gov.tw
► Until July 12

Arcadie features 83 original works by 42 masters, including Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Joan Miro. The exhibition is co-organized by TFAM and France's Centre Pompidou.
► Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM), galleries 1A and 1B, 181, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市中山北路三段181號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9:30am to 5:30pm, closes at 8:30pm on Saturdays. Tel: (02) 2595-7656. On the Net: www.tfam.museum
► Until July 12

Life, Illusion of Bodies (空身幻影) is a solo exhibition by Taiwanese artist Lee Kuang-yu (李光裕). Lee's abstract sculptures investigate themes such as the shifting line between the real and unreal, movement and stillness and the visible and the invisible.
► Taipei National University of Arts — Guandu Museum of Arts (台北藝術大學關渡美術館), 1 Xueyuan Rd, Beitou Dist, Taipei City (台北市北投區學園路1號).

Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 5pm. Tel: (02) 2896-1000 X2432. On the Net: kdmoft.nua.edu.tw
► Until June 14

Chang Dai-chien: Memorial Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition (張大千110—書畫紀念特展) displays 96 works by one of the 20th century's most revered painters working in Chinese art. From his early output, which was firmly rooted in tradition, to his later paintings, which were influenced by modernism, this exhibit provides insight into the painter's evolution as an artist and the different schools of thought that influenced him.
► National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館), 49 Nanhai Rd, Taipei City (台北市南海路49號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2361-0270. On the Net: www.nmh.gov.tw
► Until June 14

Collision Between Taboo and Desire: Hou Chun-ming Works of Print, 1992-2008 (六腳侯氏—衝撞在慾望與禁忌之間的版畫創作 1992-2008) displays 13 sets of the artist's printmaking. Bearing titles such as *Erotic Paradise* and *Paradise Lost for the Heterosexuals*, the prints unflinchingly explore religion, sexual desire and the artist's own life experiences.
► National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts in Taichung (國立台灣美術館), 2, Wucyuan W Rd Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市五權西路一段2號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9am to 5pm. Tel: (04) 2372-3552
► Until May 24

RESTAURANTS

Irodori Sushi (鰹彩壽司)

Address: 11F, 45, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段45號11樓)

Telephone: (02) 2771-0658

Open: 11am to 9:30pm (kitchen closes at 9pm); closes at 10pm on weekends

Average meal: NT\$500

Details: Chinese and Japanese picture menu; credit cards accepted

Irodori Sushi (鰹彩壽司) is located in Sogo's Zhongxiao location, but its food is a refreshing departure from what is found in standard shopping centers. The menu takes a step away from the usual offerings of nigiri, hand rolls and sashimi platters (though there are plenty of those) with offerings like sushi sets that represent the five elements (五行壽司, NT\$588), a set that allows you to sample tuna sashimi prepared three ways (鮪魚三味, NT\$380) and beef tartar (牛肉塔塔, NT\$260).



It's gold — literally. A piece of sushi from Irodori Sushi's five elements set.

PHOTO: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

The five elements sushi set is beautifully presented; in fact, it's arguably more fun to look at than it is to eat. Water is represented by a slice of squid sashimi on top of a ball of rice rolled in granules of dried squid ink. The latter added a very light touch of brininess to the sweetness of the squid. Another standout was the gold sushi, which was a scoop of tuna tartar topped with minced green onion on a ball of rice. The entire thing was liberally sprinkled with flakes of edible gold, which added nothing to the flavor but nonetheless felt extremely decadent to eat. Earth was nigiri topped with a poached oyster, fire included a seared scallop and wood was represented by a giant prawn topped with salmon roe.

Our next dish, seared rare steak nigiri sushi (炙燒生牛肉, NT\$120) was disappointing. The meat was tender, but oddly bland. In fact, even the bit of onion garnishing each piece was flavorless. We had better luck with our order of salmon roe on top of rice wrapped with salmon sashimi (鮭魚親子單卷, NT\$180). The salty, firm roe was a good contrast to the buttery, silky fish. On the downside, the sushi could have been better made. The two rolls were wrapped too loosely and came apart as we were picking them up with our chopsticks — ironic for a dish whose Chinese name translates as "salmon fish roe warship." Instead of enjoying most of the roe on the sushi, we picked them off of our plate, where they had scattered. We rounded off our meal with the restaurant's signature sashimi set (鮪風生魚片, NT\$460), which included slices of yellowtail, salmon, mackerel, squid, as well as scallops and prawns. The tender sashimi was sliced well and presented elegantly, and the prawn, scallop and squid were also very good.

Irodori Sushi serves donburi bowls for diners with heartier appetites. On a separate visit, I ordered the salmon roe, scallop and sea urchin bowl (海膽干貝丼, NT\$480), even though the wild mushroom and filet mignon bowl (野菌菲力牛肉丼, NT\$420) also looked tempting. I was happy with my selection, however, because the scallops were very fat and sweet and the chef was not stingy with the sea urchin. Served with pickled vegetables, soup, salad and a steamed egg, the donburi bowls are the best value on Irodori's menu. I also sampled two hand rolls. My favorite was the soft shell crab roll (軟殼蟹手卷, NT\$100) because the fried crab was crisp and meaty, not limp or greasy. The tuna tartar and minced green onion roll (蔥花鮪魚手卷, NT\$80) was also fine. — CATHERINE SHU

Afternoon Tea

Address: 2F, 45, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段45號2樓)

Telephone: (02) 8771-8417

Open: 11am to 9:30pm; closes at 10pm on weekends

Average meal: NT\$350

Details: Chinese, English and Japanese menu; credit cards accepted

Afternoon Tea is perched on Sogo Zhongxiao's second floor and overlooks Zhongxiao East Road — and the department store's outdoor "It's a Small World" clock, which is based on the popular Disneyland attraction and goes off with music and dancing dolls every hour. Fortunately, Afternoon Tea's bay windows are soundproof and diners can enjoy their drinks



Afternoon Tea's original apple pie is nothing if not creative.

PHOTO: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

and very sweet cakes and pastries in peace. The popular restaurant (we had to wait almost half an hour for seats on a Saturday afternoon) is as frilly as its fruit tarts, with rattan chairs, crystal chandeliers, flowers on each table and a giant mural of a cherry blossom filled garden.

I ordered an original apple pie (AT原創蘋果派, NT\$150) and pot of hot caramel tea (焦糖茶, NT\$120). Afternoon Tea's version of apple pie is actually more like a layer cake, with slices of caramelized apples nestled in between syrup-soaked sponge cake and mounds of fluffy whipped cream. The confection sounds like it would be overwhelming sweet, but it is just right, with the whipped cream tempering the sweetness of the apples and cake. It paired very well with my pot of caramel tea, which is actually black tea with a hint of rich caramel aroma and not candy-like at all, even with sugar cubes and cream stirred in.

On a separate visit, my dining companion and I split a plate of spaghetti with tomato cream sauce, chicken and spinach (雞肉菠菜蕃茄奶油意大利麵, NT\$210) from Afternoon Tea's selection of pasta dishes. The savory chicken sausage was delicious, even though the price was a little high considering the rather dainty portion.

We selected our drinks, pineapple with honey jelly (黃金鳳梨薄荷伯爵冰, NT\$150) and strawberry and raspberry julep tea (草莓覆盆莓伯爵茶凍, NT\$160), because they were the most interesting looking selections on the refreshment menu. Both were so filled with jelly, fruit and cream, however, that they would have worked better as desserts instead of complements for our food. The tartness of each frozen pineapple chunk was lost in the honey-flavored jelly and juice; the strawberry and raspberry julep tea, which featured fresh fruit and berry syrup, was more refreshing, even though it had little in the way of actual tea.

If you are happy with your Afternoon Tea experience, you can take some of the restaurant's atmosphere home with you by shopping in its relentlessly frou gift shop, Afternoon Tea Living. It is crammed with bone china tea sets, very flowery table linen, delicate glassware, Liberty-print bags, little silver spoons and other kitchen accoutrements, including handmade glass chopstick rests, decorated Pyrex measuring cups and a clever little plastic banana holder for people who are willing to spend NT\$300 to avoid squished fruit.

— CATHERINE SHU